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SOME ASPECTS OF THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM

Bolingbroke's famous statement that "history is philosophy teaching by example," is particularly applicable to the American immigration problem, for it is only in the light of our own history that we can attempt to solve a question involving so many diverse, complicated, and elsewhere unprecedented, factors. President Cleveland, in his famous veto message of the immigration bill of 1897, ably gave expression to this idea in pointing out that "a contemplation of the grand results" of our immigration policy precludes our regarding it "as an original proposition and viewed as an experiment," merely. Substantially all the arguments advanced against our present policy of *regulating* immigration, as distinguished from the new schemes to *restrict* it, are based upon unwarranted and commonly sweeping assumptions, or an imperfect reading of our history and of the history of the agencies for the Americanization and assimilation of the immigrants. Few students of the immigration question have studied the general subject and its factors historically with any degree of thoroughness. The exponents of restriction have frequently been either politicians and advocates appealing to or swayed by popular prejudices, or economists with only slight familiarity with this branch of our national history, and still less familiar with the development and extent of our present-day Americanizing agencies, or with the history of the "new" immigrant races in our midst, whom they distrust. Nor is this strange, in view of the fact, pointed out by Professor Callender in an article on "The Position of American Economic History,"¹ that even our trained historians have greatly neglected such fields in our economic and social history in general—an observation particularly applicable to the innumerable agencies scattered throughout our country, which are working for the welfare of the immigrant, and which have developed since 1881, the date commonly assigned as marking the beginning of our present era of new immigration from southern and eastern Europe. Dogmatic reiteration gives the semblance of proof; and it is remarkable how many erroneous or unproven statements are current in this field.

The national Immigration Commission conducted substantially all its investigations in terms of race, and adopted as its ultimate conclusion or assumption the view (unproven by its own investigations) that the new immigration, unlike the old, requires re-

¹ *American Historical Review*, October, 1913, p. 80.

striction and not merely regulation. There was very little historical investigation made by the commission; there were no public hearings for discussion of remedies by experts; and no effort was made to study the economic and social conditions which the "old" immigrant encountered, and substantially none to study the innumerable present-day Americanizing agencies, comparing them with the scanty ones of the former period and weighing the effects of their relative potency and success. The old immigrant, because more closely related to us in point of race-stock and language, is assumed to have been rapidly and readily assimilated and to have created high American standards of wages and living, while greater differences of race and language are assumed to lead to the opposite result as to the new immigrants. In this way, the conditions attending the arrival of the old immigrant (almost absolutely the same as the new immigrant now encounters) are conveniently ignored, or sunk in a mythical Golden Age, now past; and present-day Americanizing agencies are overlooked.

Professor Henry P. Fairchild, in his newly published work on *Immigration*² unlike most other recent restrictionist writers who have commonly followed in the wake of the Immigration Commission, out-heroding Gen. Walker, argues that until our Revolutionary War, we had practically no "immigration" at all, the arrivals being substantially all "colonists" of English or allied stock, Protestant in creed, and therefore homogeneous and English;³ that then our American institutions were established, and the immigrants who have since come over, being of other race or creed, have jeopardized our American institutions, economic, political, and social; and have merely prevented a corresponding or even greater native growth, which, presumably, because of the "superior" English stock, would have accomplished far more than even the old immigration accomplished.⁴

Is it true that the large immigration of our day results in a larger percentage of increase of foreign-born in our country than heretofore? The Immigration Commission shows that the decade of 1850 to 1860 was marked by an increase of 84.4 per cent foreign-born, the largest in our history, while from 1890 to 1900 there was an increase of only 11.8 per cent, the smallest since our census takers began to compile such returns, in 1850.⁵ Even

² Macmillan, 1913, pp. ix, 455.

³ Henry Pratt Fairchild, *Immigration*, pp. 27 *et seq.*, 51-2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 163-4, 222 *et seq.*, 341 *et seq.*

⁵ *Reports of the Immigration Commission*, 1911, vol. I, p. 123.

during the decade 1900 to 1910, the percentage of increase was only about 30.7 per cent as compared with 38.5 per cent for the decade from 1880 to 1890.⁶ Nor has the percentage of foreign-born in our total population varied greatly during recent decades, ranging from 13.2 per cent in 1860 to 14.7 per cent in 1910, and at intermediate decades being 14.4 per cent, 13.3 per cent, 14.7 per cent, and 13.6 per cent.⁷ The ratio of male to female immigrants for the past decade appears appreciably larger than it is in fact, because so many male immigrants who would normally have sent for their families returned to Europe instead, during the panic period of 1907 and thereafter, and were counted once more when they returned unattended in better times; and because the number of domestics immigrating has latterly decreased largely, though concededly a larger number of the new immigrants than of the old come over unaccompanied by their families and are less disposed to send for them promptly.

Professor Fairchild, in support of his thesis that immigration was practically a negligible factor before 1820 during the building of the nation, quotes⁸ Professor Commons that "it is the distinctive fact regarding colonial migration that it was Teutonic in blood and Protestant in religion," and adds:

The English element, then, was sufficiently preëminent to reduce all other elements to its type. As a result of the character of the migration assimilation was easy, quick, and complete. . . . The whole coast, from Nova Scotia to the Spanish possessions in Florida, was one in all essential circumstances. Such, then, was the American people at the time of the Revolution—a physically homogeneous race composed almost wholly of native-born descendants of native-born ancestors, of a decidedly English type . . . upon which all subsequent additions must be regarded as extraneous grafts.

From historical investigations, however, we learn a different story. Bancroft, many years ago, said:⁹ "The United States were severally colonized by men in origin, religious faith, and purposes as varied as their climes." Differences in language, customs, education, and views, on the one hand, and lack of assimilative agencies here, on the other, made the Germans, Swiss,

⁶ *Abstract of Thirteenth Census*, p. 188.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁸ *Immigration*, p. 51.

⁹ I quote from A. Maurice Low's stimulating work, *The American People—A Study in National Psychology*, vol. 1, p. 275, whose second volume contains particularly interesting chapters entitled "The Influence of Immigration on American Development" and "Manners and the Immigrant."

Swedes, Dutch, and Irish immigrants coming over before 1881 no whit less easy to assimilate than are the new immigrants in our own day: and the extent and degree of these differences and difficulties were emphasized again and again, about sixty years ago, by Know-nothings and their predecessors, in substantially the same terms used by the restrictionists, in our own day. In the former period the "Teutonic stock theory" was not available as a test of desirability of immigrants, because members of this great stock were then being abused by the provincialists, but to-day, consistency presumably requires that the Irish be placed in the Teutonic class.¹⁰

It has been well pointed out that, despite specious attempted distinctions between immigrants and colonists, we are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants here, all except the American Indian. Edward Everett, in a classic lecture on "The Discovery and Colonization of America and Immigration to the United States," delivered in 1853, sums up our entire history as an achievement of immigrants.

It is true that some sections of our country, notably New England, frowned upon all new arrivals, English or continental, Episcopalian as well as Catholic,¹¹ but most of the colonies and states welcomed the immigrant and realized the advantages likely to be reaped from his coming. This issue has been raised ever since the beginning of our government. Senator Maclay of Pennsylvania, in describing the debates on the naturalization bill of 1790 in the United States Senate, amusingly said: "We Pennsylvanians act as if we believed that God made of one blood all the families of the earth; but the eastern people seem to think that he made none but New England folks." James Wilson, in the Constitutional Convention of 1787¹²

cited Pennsylvania as proof of the advantages of encouraging immigration. It was perhaps the youngest (except Georgia) settled on the Atlantic, yet it was at least among the foremost in population and prosperity. He remarked that almost all the general officers of the

¹⁰ See *Industrial Commission Reports*, vol. 15, p. 489 *et seq.*; and *Immigration Commission Reports*, vol. 41, pp. 208-9, 221-5; also Hourwich, *Immigration and Labor* (Putnam, 1912), pp. 61-81.

¹¹ See Proper, *Colonial Immigration Laws*; Fairchild, *Immigration*; Capen, *Historical Development of the Poor Laws of Connecticut*.

¹² *Documentary History of the Constitution*, III, p. 509. Compare James Madison's statement in the same convention: "That part of America which had encouraged them [the foreigners] most, has advanced most rapidly in population, agriculture, and the arts."

Pennsylvania line of the late army were foreigners. And no complaint has ever been made against their fidelity or merit. Three of her deputies to the convention (Robert Morris, Mr. Fitzsimmons, and himself) were not natives.

The Declaration of Independence recited, as one of the grievances of the colonies against the king, that "he has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws of Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their immigration hither," and in August, 1776, Congress adopted a comprehensive committee report to the same effect.

But, to return to the non-English elements of our population at the beginning of our national government and in colonial days, the extent of this immigration and the difficulties of assimilation in that day have both been greatly minimized. We had no really comprehensive study of colonial censuses until Professor F. B. Dexter published his *Estimates of Population in the American Colonies*, in 1887; and no basis for scientific study of race-stocks, until the returns of the first census were published in detail and analyzed in *A Century of Population Growth*, in 1909. As most of our early American historians were New Englanders—and in New England the immigrant was comparatively unknown until very recently—it is natural that they should have underestimated the extent and influence of foreign factors before 1881. Professor William Z. Ripley, however, writing on "Races in the United States,"¹³ understates rather than overstates the facts, when he says, on the authority of Bancroft's *History*¹⁴ that "for the entire thirteen colonies at the time of the Revolution, we have it on good authority that one fifth of the population could not speak English, and that one half at least was not Anglo-Saxon by descent."¹⁵

¹³ *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1908, p. 745.

¹⁴ Vol. VII, p. 355.

¹⁵ Contrasting this with our present-day condition, we find that in 1900 only 1,217,280 of all our foreign-born residents over 10 years of age, or 12.2 per cent, could not speak English, which percentage had decreased from 15.6 per cent for 1890 (*Imm. Comm. Reports*, I, p. 160). This gives just about the same percentage now unable to speak English as at the time of the Revolution! The Census Bureau, solely on the basis of family names, estimated in *A Century of Population Growth* (pp. 116-121) that 82.1 per cent of our population in 1790 was of English stock, 7 per cent Scotch, 1.9 per cent Irish, 2.5 per cent Dutch, 0.6 per cent French, 5.6 per cent German, and 0.3 per cent "all others" (including, on the basis of the states for which we have actual returns, 1/20 of 1 per cent Hebrews). Professor A. B. Faust in his *German Element in*

Mr. Proper, in his valuable work *Colonial Immigration Laws*, deals with attempted colonial legal regulation of immigration, chiefly in the direction of attempting to exclude convicts (many thousands of whom arrived in the eighteenth century), and paupers, and the physically unfit, and how these efforts were largely thwarted by the Crown's veto power, as also by the British policy of discouraging immigration, shortly before the Revolution. Valuable historical legal material from England's point of view, supplementing this study, is to be found in William F. Craies' interesting article, "Compulsion of Subjects to Leave the Realm."¹⁶ Mr. Proper mentions, but does not consider in detail, the different nationalities included in our colonial immigration; calls attention to the fact (p. 70) that the Carolinas and Georgia "at the outbreak of the Revolution, had a greater number of foreign-born inhabitants than any other three of the colonies"; and concludes that (p. 84) "much that is best and noblest in America is a monument to the superior mental and physical constitution, the vigor and deep religious faith of the foreign immigrants" of colonial times.

As above noticed, the Irish figured as a considerable factor in our population even before 1790. Burke in his *European Settlements in America* refers to the large number of Irish settling in 1750-1754 in Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas; and many thereafter settled in Pennsylvania. The heavy colonial immigration of Irish, French, Spanish, and others, and of English and German Catholics, to say nothing of the sprinkling of Jews, also rebuts Professor Fairchild's assertion that the country at the close of the Revolution was homogeneously Protestant.¹⁷

the United States (I, pp. 280-5) estimates the German stock at the outbreak of the Revolution at 225,000 or a little more than one tenth of the total white population, and with the aid of Professor Walter F. Willcox estimated our German population in 1790 (II, pp. 5-27), also on the basis of family names, at 375,000, say 360,000, and of the Dutch at 240,000, or a total of 600,000, as compared with an estimate by the distinguished German statistician, Professor Bockh, of 800,000, or about 19 per cent of the total white population. Professor Faust calls attention to the inadequacy of a name test, even when made by an expert (II, p. 13), which results in disregarding many Anglicized names, such as Carpenter, Smith, Miller, etc. Moreover, only names occurring 100 times or more were included by the Census Bureau expert, and this leads to necessary omission of many names.

¹⁶ *Law Quarterly Review*, vol. 6, pp. 388-409.

¹⁷ See Gen. Walker's article, "Growth and Distribution of Population," in Harper and Brothers' *First Century of the Republic*; also Emmet, "Irish Immigration during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Journal*

In colonial days the heaviest race-stream was made up of the German immigrants. William Penn invited them to settle in Pennsylvania immediately after that territory was granted to him, and they became an important element in the population from the founding of Germantown in 1683, becoming very numerous after the Palatine persecutions early in the eighteenth century. Benjamin Rush wrote in 1789 a valuable and unbiased account¹⁸ of the German population before our first census. He quotes¹⁹ Governor Thomas of Pennsylvania as saying in 1747 that the Germans of Pennsylvania were three fifths of the whole population (of 200,000) and that "they have, by their industry, been the principal instruments of raising the state to its present flourishing condition, beyond any of his Majesty's colonies in North America"—and nearly all came over as redemptioners or indentured servants. As early as 1790, five sixths of East Pennsylvania was German.²⁰ Rush himself emphasizes their enormous value in developing agriculture throughout the colonies. Professor Geiser has correctly observed²¹ that from 1728 to the end of the century "the history of immigration is practically that of servants (indentured or redemptioners) under various conditions," a statement confirmed by Kapp,²² and it is shown by von

of the American Irish Historical Society, vol. II; O'Meagher, "Irish Immigration to the United States since 1790," *idem*, vol. IV; Byrne, *Irish Emigration to the United States*; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article on "Migration" and bibliography and related articles; Callender, *Selections from the Economic History of the United States*; series on foreign elements in American history by Goebel, Colenbrander, Putnam, and Shepherd, in *Report of the American Historical Association* for 1909; series by Casson, in *Munsey's Magazine*, vols. 34, 35, on different elements in American history; Commons, *Races and Immigrants in America*; Schurz, "True Americanism," in *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers*; Fosdick, *French Blood in America*; Flom, *Norwegian Immigration into the United States*; Learned, *The Early Immigration and the Immigration Question of Today* (Pa-German Soc. Pubs., XII); Grace Abbott, "Bulgarians of Chicago," *Charities*, vol. 21, p. 653; also her article on "Immigration," in *The Survey*, Jan. 7, 1911, as well as article on "Immigrants in Cities," by E. A. Goldenweiser, in same issue; also Bushee, *Ethnic Factors in the Population of Boston*.

¹⁸ *Account of the Manners of the German Inhabitants of Pennsylvania*, edited by I. D. Rupp.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13, note.

²¹ *Redemptioners and Indentured Servants in the Colony and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, pp. 25, 41.

²² *Immigration and the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York* (1870), p. 9.

Fürstenwärther²³ to have been true as late as 1818. The German immigration to Pennsylvania was so great, as early as 1718, that fears were at first entertained that Pennsylvania would cease to be a British province, and the governor was compelled to veto a bill forbidding further immigration into Pennsylvania, "because of its cruelty."²⁴

In general, though almost everything stood in the way of assimilation, these German immigrants were promptly assimilated. In exceptional cases, however, like that of the "Pennsylvania Dutch," they remain alien, even after one hundred and fifty years down to our own day. Franklin observed in 1759 that "the labor of the plantations is performed chiefly by indentured servants, brought from Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany; because of the high price it bears, it cannot be performed any other way." And it is to specialized studies of the system of indentured servants or redemptioners in the colonies that we must turn for knowledge of the position of the early immigrants in general.²⁵

It is difficult to conceive of any system less calculated to promote assimilation than this "indentured servant" system in colonial days, under which non-English-speaking individuals and families were brought over to be sold into a form of slavery for a term of years to pay their passage money; who came in quantities not limited by any demand, so that prices were arbitrarily high or low; who were not permitted to return, because the only possible profit in the venture arose from keeping them here; and who were often obliged as a condition of emigrating to renounce the right to return to their native homes; whose time was not their own during the years of their involuntary servitude, so that even the primitive schooling then possible was practically denied them; and who were politically, economically, and socially segregated from their masters. Truly, the historical student cannot agree that the colonists were "a homogeneous lot of Englishmen and Protestants"; and it is part of our miraculous history that agencies then brought into action (and which are today more, not less, potent) have resulted in our quick and healthy absorption of the immigrant.

²³ *Der Deutsche in Nord Amerika*, outlining the author's mission to America for the sole purpose of studying immigration conditions of that day.

²⁴ S. H. Cobb, *The Palatine or German Immigration to New York and Pennsylvania*, p. 30.

²⁵ See Geiser, *op cit.*; Faust, *op cit.*; Ballagh, *White Servitude in the Colony of Virginia*; and Byrd, "Slavery and Indentured Servants," in the *American Historical Review*, vol. I. p. 88.

Our earliest accurate immigration records begin in 1820, under the federal law of 1819, though there is a recent estimate which indicates that 345,000 aliens arrived between 1776 and 1820, an estimate none too high, when we consider the unrest caused by the reactionary conditions following the downfall of Napoleon, and European famines of this period, as well as systematic stimulation of immigration to the new land of freedom and political and economic equality. The act of 1819 also sounded the deathknell of the redemptioner system, as its provisions for decent treatment and adequate space aboard ship rendered the old methods hazardous and unprofitable.

II

The period from 1820 to 1881 was marked by a continuance of the same stream of immigrants that had characterized the earlier period, except that the numbers became somewhat greater, by reason of financial depression abroad, famines, and occasional political and religious unrest, on the one hand, and superior industrial and political opportunity here, on the other. Kapp, writing as far back as 1870, well said that "the territory which constitutes the present United States owes its wonderful development mainly to the influx of the poor and outcast of Europe;"²⁶ and he noted a fact which could be fully recognized only since we began to collate accurate statistics of emigration from the United States in 1907—that "bad times in Europe regularly increase, and bad times in America invariably decrease, immigration."²⁷ The figures he presents as to the illiteracy of the immigrants of 1868, made up almost wholly of German, Swiss, Irish, Scotch, and English,²⁸ are interesting as being substantially the same as prevail today; 7,397 immigrants for whom positions were secured, out of 31,143, could neither read nor write, there being 3,096 illiterate males out of 18,114, and 4,301 females out of 13,029. There were 2,714 Irish, Scotch, and English illiterates out of 9,269; and out of 23,315 Irish, Scotch, and English female servants 7,682 could neither read nor write.

In J. B. Angell's review of the books of the German traveler Löher, dealing with his German-American compatriots of the middle of the nineteenth century,²⁹ we read of the German "brawler

²⁶*Immigration and the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York*, p. 5.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

²⁹*North American Review*, vol. 82 (Jan., 1856), pp. 248-265.

and ruffian in Philadelphia” and the “tumultuous haranguer and street-fighter of New York.” He adds:

Many a German is amazed and grieved at the great moral contrast between multitudes of immigrants and the quiet citizens of his ancient home. The cause is apparent. The tares are suffered to grow with the wheat. No hundred-handed police repress every budding vice. Even the reaction which is natural after escape from governmental oppression is not at all checked.

The large number of inmates of German jails and workhouses aroused special comment.

Conditions among the Irish here at that time were, of course, far worse, in view of the Irish potato-famine, general Irish economic distress and conditions of living, lack of school facilities, and governmental neglect.³⁰

The Immigration Commission and numerous restrictionists endeavor to show that persecution, which drove so many people here in the past, is no longer an important factor; but the truth is that during the nineteenth century this factor was practically negligible as compared with the persecutions driving the Jews, Finns, Poles, and Armenians over in our day.³¹ Throughout our national history, superior economic opportunity has been the chief inducement of immigration.

During the period from 1821 to 1881 over 10,000,000 immigrants came to this country, and in the period from 1881 through 1910 over 17,000,000 more, these figures making no allowance for returning immigrants or immigrants coming again. The average of 13,802 per year for the decade 1820 to 1830 rose to 59,913 per year for the following decade, and to 171,235 per year between 1841 and 1850, 259,524 per year the next decade, then fell to 231,482 to rise again in successive decades to 281,219, 524,661, 368,756, and to 879,539 per year for the last decade. In 1842 the hundred-thousand mark was passed, and in 1905 the million mark.³² The reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration show that from 1820 to 1912 the various countries sent us immigrants in the following numbers:³³

³⁰ Compare Walker, *Discussions in Economics and Statistics* (edited by D. R. Dewey), vol. II, p. 472.

³¹ The reader who seeks an interesting historical analysis of the motives of nineteenth century immigration may find much light in a paper by Thomas W. Page on “Causes of Earlier European Immigration to the United States” in *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 19, pp. 677, 685 *et seq.*

³² Vol. 3 *Reports Imm. Comm.*, pp. 4, 5.

³³ For figures of 1912, see *Report*, p. 80.

	1820-1912	Since 1881
Netherlands	190,954	143,746
France	487,504	171,262
Switzerland	244,364	155,052
Scandinavia	2,014,245	1,603,178
Italy	3,426,377	3,345,096
Germany	5,411,444	2,359,469
Great Britain and Ireland.....	7,951,671	3,410,049
Austria	3,510,379 ¹	3,429,634
Russia	2,712,316	2,704,815
Other countries	3,661,000	

¹ Since 1861.

These figures show that although the countries of northern and western Europe no longer furnish the same percentage of immigrants as before 1881, they continue sending appreciable numbers; and, on the other hand, they indicate that the countries of southern and eastern Europe had sent us some immigrants long before 1881. They reflect also the great economic development of the countries of western and northern Europe, which accounts for decrease of immigration from there, and the economic backwardness and religious and political persecution of the southern and eastern countries.

This is not the place to enlarge on the invaluable services rendered by the immigrants to this country from 1820 to 1881; neglected as the subject is, no candid student can deny that to them we owe much of our great development and prosperity, and that their patriotism has always been at our command.³⁴ Nor should we be misled by the occasional former criticism of the "old" immigrant, and the dangers that beset our country in the past; the sober sense of the country always welcomed the immigrant, and recognized his value. Particularly outspoken on this point have been such great statesmen as Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln, and Cleveland, despite efforts of restrictionists to unearth an occasional passage indicating that one or more of these leaders realized that possible dangers also beset us from the immigrant. The anti-French feeling of John Adams' administration led to the passage of our Alien and Sedition laws, it is true, but that very issue drove the Federalists out of power for decades; and the Republican platform of 1800 foreshadowed Jefferson's famous presidential message of 1801, which laid down our established national policy in the rhetorical question: "Shall we refuse

³⁴ See particularly Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*; Kapp, *Immigration and the Commissioners of Emigration*; Low, *American People*; Bryce, *American Commonwealth*; Faust, *German Element*.

the unhappy fugitives from distress that hospitality which the savages of the wilderness extended to our forefathers arriving in this land? Shall oppressed humanity find no asylum on this globe?" Time and again, this policy was reaffirmed in Congress, in the press, and in national party platforms; our ministers abroad were even instructed to seek to remove obstacles to emigration³⁵ and President Lincoln induced the passage of a bill to encourage immigration and to furnish free transportation into the interior. The incident of the Know-nothing movement was due chiefly to religious prejudice, and soon passed away. The *History of Immigration Investigation and Legislation*, prepared by the Senate Committee on Immigration, dated February 22, 1893, correctly states (p. x) that "from the foundation of the government until about the time of the passage of the national statute of 1882 the prevalent sentiment seemed to be the encouragement of immigration." The Chinese exclusion agitation in the seventies first led to the organization of labor-union sentiment against admission of the Chinese; and subsequently to the present-day agitation for restriction of all immigration.

The argument that immigration has decreased the native American birth-rate and precluded an increment of native population as great or even greater, scarcely merits serious consideration; much less does the extraordinary assumption that the possible increment thus displaced would have accomplished more for us than did the immigrant increment.³⁶ The Census Bureau, in its work *A Century of Population Growth* (pp. 85-9), concludes that in 1900 immigration contributed thirty million souls to our population and forty billion dollars to our wealth.

III

Of the immigrants of the period 1899-1910, 26.7 per cent of those fourteen years old or over could not read or write (35.8 per cent of the new immigrants and 2.7 per cent of the old).

³⁵ *Niles' Register*, vol. 65, p. 265.

³⁶ Dr. Hourwich satisfactorily disposes of this argument in his work *Immigration and Labor*, pp. 221-7, by showing that the decrease of the birth-rate is a universal phenomenon today, and is particularly marked even in Australia, where there has been practically no immigration latterly; Gen. Walker seems first to have formulated the theory (*Discussions in Economics and Statistics* II, pp. 417 *et seq.*, 437), but, aside from the fact that the world-wide character of this decrease was not then recognized, Gen. Walker had himself previously scientifically explained the decreasing birth-rate quite differently (*Id.* II, p. 29 *et seq.*, especially pp. 42-3, 44, 195, 204; also his essay in *The First Century of the Republic*, pp. 235-6).

The percentage of illiteracy in each group was as follows:

South Italians	53.9	Bohemians and Moravians	1.7
Hebrews	26	English	1.
Polish	35.4	French	6.3
Lithuanians	48.9	Germans	5.2
Croatian and Slovenians	36.1	North Italians	11.5
Greeks	26.4	Irish	2.6
Russian	38.4	Welsh	34.9

The government figures for the fiscal year 1912 show that 63 per cent of the immigrants for that year were males, and that 21 per cent of the males over 14 years old were illiterate, and nearly 25 per cent of the females. The Immigration Commission, in its report on "Emigration Conditions Abroad" shows, however, that the percentage of literacy among the immigrants from southern and eastern Europe is very much higher, in general, than that for those foreign countries at large, indicating that we still get the more intelligent and enterprising of such races. Even in these countries, people are now reasonably familiar in practice with the exercise of the suffrage and representative government.

It is time that we turned to authorities who are familiar with the new immigrants in our midst, their past experiences here, and the agencies open to Americanize them, for light on this problem. Immigrants from nearly all of the various races from southern and eastern Europe have been settled here for many years, and we learn almost uniformly that there has been little difficulty in Americanizing and assimilating them. For example, *The Italian in America*, by Lord Trenor and Barrows reminds us how much we owe to the Italians from Columbus down to our own day. Italian settlement throughout the nineteenth century, especially in agriculture, only awaits a competent chronicler to show that it does not indicate difficulty of Americanization. Professor Balch, in her excellent work *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens*, outlines many decades of worthy citizenship on the part of Poles and Bohemians in America, running back to valuable services during our Revolutionary War. The same is true of the Jews in America, and of other races included among the new immigrants, all of which refutes the unwarranted assumptions of the restrictionists. The investigations of the Immigration Commission, especially with respect to our school rolls, also bear this out.

Disinterested social workers who have devoted their lives to studying these new immigrants find that they are being rapidly absorbed, and are valuable increments to our population. It is time that we heeded the observations of capable students at close range, such as has been furnished to us in valuable studies by

Jane Addams, Lillian D. Wald, Peter Roberts, Emily Balch, Grace Abbott, Edward A. Steiner, and others.

Moreover, we are apt to overlook the fact that over 80 per cent of the immigrants of 1912 reported that they were joining relatives here, and nearly 14 per cent more reported that they were going to friends, so that this most important agency for Americanization and aid in new and untried surroundings was open for all but 8 per cent of the immigrants in question. It is this important factor that accounts for the wonderful success of the immigrants, landing here almost wholly without funds and unfamiliar with our language, of whom a purely negligible quantity only became public charges. It is this factor, together with other agencies presently to be considered, which accounts for the remarkable fact that the United Hebrew Charities of New York, for instance, have only about half as many applications for assistance today as they had about fifteen years ago, when the Jewish population and the Jewish immigration was much less than half as large! We are also entirely too prone to forget the lessons of the census, pointed out for us by Professor Walter F. Willcox for the Twelfth Census, and reapplied by him to the Thirteenth,³⁷ that the natural distribution of immigrants is much wider and more thorough than appears from their originally reported destinations. Nor should we forget that it is the illiterate immigrant, victim of inferior conditions in his own country, upon whom we depend to do work which the more literate laborer will not perform—working our farms, digging our subways, excavating our lots, and operating our mines.

For example, the 1,197,892 immigrant aliens who came over here in the fiscal year 1913 included 333,285 farmers and farm laborers (exclusive of their wives and minor children entered as having no occupation), whom we particularly need here, and who would be most likely to be debarred by an educational test. Professor Balch pointed out before the American Economic Association, in 1911, that “most Americans have an entirely false conception of the real significance of peasant illiteracy, which need not connote a lack of either energy or intelligence.” The census reports indicate that the literacy among native white children of foreign-born is appreciably higher than among native white children of native-born.³⁸

³⁷*Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 20, p. 523; and *Papers Twenty-fourth Meeting of the American Economic Association*, p. 66 et seq.

³⁸*Abstract Thirteenth Census*, p. 239.

When we turn, however, to a study of the genesis and potency of the agencies provided for the assimilation of the immigrant, his Americanization and improvement, we notice that nearly all have been developed during the past few decades, and were unavailable to the old immigrant. Even educational facilities for the immigrant were formerly most elementary and inadequate, while we have today night schools with special immigrant classes, social settlements and educational alliances, industrial, trade and vocational schools, instruction in civics, improved foreign newspapers, and public lectures in foreign language. Labor unions and other associations promote high wages and high standards of living. These have gone up steadily, and not down. Tenement-house reform and increased railroad transit have improved housing conditions, particularly in our large cities, to a degree undreamed of in the days of the Gilder commission.

Federal and state bureaus of information for immigrants and resident laborers, employment bureaus, immigrant aid societies, immigrant service of the Young Men's Christian Association and of other church organizations, and such organizations as the Italian Immigrant Bureau, the Industrial Removal Office, the Hebrew Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, the Baron de Hirsch Fund, and other similar organizations throughout the land, do effective work in Americanizing the immigrant, finding employment for him at good wages, overcoming tendencies towards congestion, effecting distribution, and promoting acquisition of American standards of living and thinking.³⁹ Of course, such agencies deserve and require unlimited extension and development; and in a number of our states, regulative legislation is badly needed, especially as applying to mining and labor camps.

³⁹ One must turn to innumerable scattered, individual reports to get an idea of the number and extent of these agencies and their achievements, for no historical and descriptive account of any individual branch even of these many activities has, to my knowledge, been thus far published. See particularly vol. 41 of *Reports of Immigration Commission*; "Distribution of Admitted Aliens and other Residents"; *Proceedings of the Conference of State Immigration, Land and Labor Officials with Representatives of the Division of Information Bureau of Immigration*, Nov. 1911; *Report of the Commission of Immigration of the State of New York, 1909*; *The First Century of the Republic* (Harper's, 1876); Robert's *The New Immigration*; Jane Addams, *Twenty-Years of Hull House*; Griffin, *A List of Books on Immigration*; Carroll D. Wright, "Influence of Trade Unions on Immigrants," in *Bulletin of Bureau of Labor*, January, 1905, and chapter on this subject in Wiernik's *The Jews in America*, pp. 297-300; as also Hourwich, *Immigration and Labor*, pp. 325-52.

In the light of these agencies the unbiased student cannot but conclude that the assimilative process today, even among the newer races in question, is far more potent than it was in the old immigration. Mr. Bryce, in the new edition of his *American Commonwealth* sums up the philosophy of this process:⁴⁰

The point in which the present case of race fusion most differs from all preceding cases, is in the immense assimilative potency of the environment. . . . The effigy and device, so to speak, which the American die impresses on every kind of metal placed beneath the stamp, is sharp and clear. The schools, the newspapers, the political institutions, the methods of business, the social usages, the general spirit in which things are done, all grasp and mould and remake a newcomer from the first day of his arrival, and turn out an American far more quickly and more completely than the like influences transform a stranger into a citizen in any other country. These things strengthen the assimilative force of American civilization, because here the ties that held the stranger to the land of his birth are quickly broken and soon forgotten. His transformation is all the swifter and more thorough because it is a willing transformation.

William D. Howells has said:⁴¹ "I believe we have been the better, we have really been the more American, for each successive assimilation in the past, and I believe we shall be the better, the more American, for that which seems the next in order." Mr. Bryce also suggests⁴² that nearly all "the instreaming races are equal in intelligence to the present inhabitants"; that a blending of races tends to stimulate intellectual fertility; and that the Jews, Poles, and Italians are likely to "carry the creative power of the country to a higher level of production" than it has yet reached. He also notes that "today, most of the hard, rough toil of the country is everywhere done by recent inhabitants from central or southern Europe. The Irish and the urban part of the German population have risen in the scale, and no longer form the bottom stratum." As to attempted comparative valuations of races, we should not forget Professor Royce's scathing analysis of the phenomenon in his *Race Questions and Provincialism and Other American Problems*. It is in initiating and developing salutary public and private agencies for distributing and Americanizing aliens, that a true solution of the immigration problem can be found.

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⁴⁰ Vol. II, p. 488.

⁴¹ *Harper's Weekly*, April 10, 1909, p. 28.

⁴² *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 482.